

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in the above application. By the above amendment, claims 19 and 20 have been added.

The Office Action dated October 4, 2005, has been received and carefully reviewed. In that Office Action, claims 1, 2, 14-16 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 2000-331521. Claims 3-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 2000-331521 in view of Funamoto. Claim 17 was objected to for being dependent upon a rejected base claim but was indicated to be allowable if amended to include the limitations of its base claim. This has been done by the above amendment. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-18 and examination and allowance of claims 19 and 20 is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and following remarks.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 2000-331521. By the above amendment, claim 1 has been amended to further define the structure of the stopper. As presently defined, the stopper includes a first portion overlaying a portion of the holder and a projecting portion, not parallel to the first portion, that projects from the first portion along the first side surface of the light guide member. The surface lighting device as now claimed is not shown or suggested in JP 2000-331521 or the other references of record, and it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-15, 18 and 19 are therefore in condition for allowance. New claim 19 further defines the structure of the claimed stopper and further distinguishes over the art of record for this reason.

Claim 16 has been rewritten in independent form. Claim 16 requires that the stopper be a separate member attached to the holder and include a portion for contacting the first side surface at a time of preventing the light guide member from moving toward the light source and that the portion include a through hole. This provides for improved light transmission as discussed at page 29, line 13 to page 30, line 8. This feature is not shown or suggested by the references of record, and claim 16 is submitted to be allowable for this reason.

Claims 3-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 2000-331-521 in view of Funamoto. These claims depend from claim 1. Funamoto does not show or

suggest the structure now required by claim 1, and claim 1 and its dependent claims, including claims 3-13, are submitted to be allowable for the reasons provided above in connection with claim 1.

New claim 20 is also submitted to be allowable over the art of record. Claim 20 requires a surface lighting device that includes a light guide member, having a first side facing a light source and a second side surface, a holder, and a stopper mounted on the holder for limiting movement of the light guide member toward the light source. The stopper comprises a body formed of a material that is different than the material of the holder and includes a first portion between the holder and the second side surface and a second portion projecting along the first side surface. The prior art of record does not show or suggest a surface lighting device having the claimed structure, and claim 20 is therefore submitted to be allowable.

CONCLUSION

Each issue raised in the Office Action dated October 4, 2005, has been addressed, and it is believed that claims 1-20 are in condition for allowance. Wherefore, reconsideration and allowance of these claims is earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Scott Wakeman (Reg. No. 37,750) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Application No. 10/761,273
Amendment dated January 4, 2006
Reply to Office Action of October 4, 2005

Docket No.: 4786-0101P

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.


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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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